

February 8, 1973

(Start of Belt #8)

Is there a second to that addition? Thank you. Is there any further discussion of the amendment now. The question is shall the Goodrich amendment be adopted. All those in favor say aye, those opposed say no. So ordered. The amendment is adopted. Senator Goodrich, do we have other amendments on this bill.

CLERK: None, Mr. President.

SPEAKER: Senator Goodrich.

SENATOR GOODRICH: Alright, now we've got it down to the simple subject of do we want to submit to the voters a Constitutional amendment whereby they could say yes or no as to whether or not the Legislature is permitted to provide by law or statute as we do it here whatever we want to give the blighted areas or anyone who would be encouraged to go into the blighted area and redevelop it and can we stand or can we afford to continue to ignore this area. I don't think we can and that's the sole intent and purpose of this bill..is to provide the tool or permission from the voting public that we in turn can then provide by general law for whatever we want to do in the form of giving partial tax relief to encourage the redevelopment of blighted areas. We did the same thing, in general principle, in the property tax relief for farmers and business inventories last year. I cannot, for the life of me, understand why we should not provide some kind of a encouragement, if that's what it takes, for the redevelopment of blighted areas and that's about all this simple question that we've got to decide on this thing. Now, since we had some discussion on the floor relative to this bill itself and not the amendment, I would like to respond to Senator Keyes as far as what he says this bill could do. He said, in essence, that we can then go in and redevelop this area into whatever we wanted to and we could go out on his farm, for example, and redevelop an area, build a whole town and leave it off the tax rolls. This is not right. First of all, any area, in order to be designated blighted area, must have that designation given to it by the governing body of the, either a city or a county. If a farm ground is farm ground, it is not, in any stretch of the imagination, eligible to be designated as blighted area. There are three sections of blighted area in Omaha and I'm not referring to the North side in this bill. I'm referring..the North side happens to be one of the areas designated, with the designation of blighted area, but it is not the only one. What this bill would do is ask the public, can we as a Legislature provide whatever we feel is proper for special tax relief to encourage redevelopment of that.. those areas, whether they be in Omaha or anywhere else in the state and that's the sole substance of the bill. Now, I would submit again to questions.

SPEAKER: The chair recognizes Senator Chambers first, then Senator Lewis, DeCamp, Anderson, Excuse me. OK.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Mr. President, members of the Legislature, were I a real estate developer or speculator, I couldn't ask for a better godsend and this is the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow for the speculator. This bill does not say that if I'm a home owner in a blighted area and I want tax relief so that I can improve my property as a home owner. It encourages land developers, some of whom in Omaha have over extended themselves by erecting very expensive apartment complexes which now may have 60% occupancy because they underestimated the number of people they'd be..they overestimated the number they could get into these apartments so now they are going to reach out with a different tentacle and go into an area where people may not be able to pay the property tax due to poverty, be unaware that in the Daily Record their land is up for Tax Sale, of the developers buying the land from under them. Now, I know there is time to redeem land but if you have the money to redeem it you'd have had the money to pay the tax. The developers know this and the problem in Omaha and some of these developers should tell you the